

# Inaction on Climate Change

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## Body

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To the Editor:

Re "Fighting Trump on Climate, California Becomes a Global Force" ("Runaway State" series, front page, May 25):

Climate change is not an us-versus-them issue; it affects all of us, and it is the most critical issue that the world faces. While President Trump shows his ignorance on these matters, glaciers will continue to melt, ocean levels will rise and erratic weather patterns will worsen. With other contentious issues, such as health care, a wrong move might hurt many Americans for a few years but can be corrected by future administrations. But lack of action on climate change causes damage that is cumulative and largely irreversible within our life spans.

The United States, as the second largest polluter in the world, after China, must reassert its leadership. Putting the coal industry on life support is not the way to achieve this.

Kudos to California's governor, Jerry Brown, who is prepared to forcefully stand up to Washington and keep California on the right track. Encouraging innovation and building on the success of renewable energy is the way to a better future with many high-quality jobs that the Chinese would otherwise capture. A time will come -- soon, I hope -- when the truth about climate change will be undeniable, even to the president.

PAUL ROSENBERGERMANHATTAN BEACH, CALIF.

To the Editor:

As a California environmentalist, I am proud of the efforts of our state to address our most significant environmental and social justice issue -- climate change. Gov. Jerry Brown's meeting with China next month is good news because China and California will lead the technological and manufacturing pioneering needed to transition from fossil fuels in time to avoid bigger problems.

But we need the rest of the country, made up of states with much smaller economies, to be engaged and supporting this effort, if for no other reason than to share in the millions of new jobs and businesses that will be created to meet the challenges ahead. It seems so illogical for the G.O.P., the party of business, and the president who wants to create jobs to ignore these realities. We need to put a national price on fossil fuels and return the proceeds to households.

ROBERT KALAYJIANLONG BEACH, CALIF.

To the Editor:

Re "On Climate, Look to China and India" (editorial, May 22):

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You rightly note that China and India are fast scaling up cleaner sources of electricity, particularly wind and solar power, raising questions about the United States' role. But your contention that "China and India are finding that doing right by the planet need not carry a big economic cost" misses an important point. These two countries -- like the United States -- have been economically inefficient in many of the key policies and financial tools they have used to scale up renewable energy. The result: Renewable energy has cost more than it should.

These technologies are unlikely to grow to a level that will make much difference to the planet without a smarter policy and finance approach. For the United States, that will require working with China in the clean-energy race, not merely trying to defeat it. Though China-bashing is a popular political sport in the United States, it is by leveraging China's strengths in scaling up cleaner forms of energy that the United States is likely to build a domestic clean-energy industry robust enough to help both the planet and the nation's economy.

JEFFREY BALL, DAN REICHERSTANFORD, CALIF.

The writers are, respectively, the scholar-in-residence and executive director at the Steyer-Taylor Center for Energy Policy and Finance, Stanford University.

To the Editor:

Re " 'Vulnerable Voices' Lash Out as Companies Sway Climate Talks" (front page, May 17):

I'm ashamed, but not at all surprised, that the United States is among the few countries defending the fossil fuel industry and rejecting a common-sense conflict-of-interest policy at the global climate talks. After all, President Trump nominated -- and the Senate confirmed -- the former chief executive of Exxon Mobil to lead the State Department.

In fact, your article highlights a need for action that extends far beyond the climate negotiations. Here in the United States, corporations pull the strings in nearly every area of our lives, shaping the food we eat, the air we breathe and the medicines we can afford. In the Trump era, many members of our government operate with immense conflicts between their loyalty to the private sector and the public-sector roles they now find themselves in.

We would do well to follow the lead of countries like Uganda, whose delegation is calling for a "stronger rule book" to rein in corporate power at the climate talks. We have never needed that rule book more than today.

RICHARD A. DAYNARD, BOSTON

The writer is a professor of law at Northeastern University.

To the Editor:

We find ourselves at an extraordinary moment in history. Climate change threatens to destabilize our planet and is predicted to force millions of people to flee their homes and their ways of life. And yet for too long, governments have not championed the systemwide solutions we so desperately need.

One of the reasons policy makers in the global north have been so slow to act on the science of climate change is the stranglehold fossil fuel companies have over policy making. It is clear that the same companies that profit from oil, gas and hydraulic fracturing should not be allowed to write the rule book when it comes to global climate policy.

As someone who has worked with many institutional investors divesting and protecting their assets from fossil fuels, I can say with certainty that change will not happen in time if we continue business as usual. We need policy makers operating in service of the global public good. For that reason, I applaud the governments that are calling for common-sense limits to the fossil fuel industry's access to the United Nations talks. We need their leadership now more than ever.

ELLEN DORSEY, WASHINGTON

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The writer is executive director of the Wallace Global Fund, a private family foundation that works on environmental, human rights and democracy issues.

To the Editor:

Re "Pruitt's E.P.A. Is Boon to Oil and Gas" (front page, May 21):

The evolution of Devon Energy into a major fossil fuel industry force with alarming influence over public health and environmental standards didn't start with Scott Pruitt's fox-guarding-the-henhouse takeover of the Environmental Protection Agency.

It began decades ago, with wave after wave of deregulation and consolidation in the energy industry steadily building to the pro-polluter reality we see in Washington today.

Peer-reviewed science now definitively shows that even tighter regulations on fossil fuel extraction and burning, like those proposed under the Obama administration, wouldn't be enough to stave off the worst effects of impending climate chaos.

The next 10 years are critical for rapidly moving the country off polluting oil and gas, and on to a clean energy future. A logical place to spur this transition would be on federal lands, where fossil fuel extraction should be immediately curtailed, beginning with an outright ban on fracking.

WENONAH HAUTER WASHINGTON

The writer, executive director of Food and Water Watch, is the author of "Frackopoly: The Battle for the Future of Energy and the Environment."

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